DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 292 397 HE 021 261

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TITLE Faculty Perceptions of Their Career-Helping Relationships. ASHE Annual Meeting Paper.
SPONS AGENCY American Association of Univ. Professors, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 22 Nov 87
NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (Baltimore, MD, November 21-24, 1987).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Faculty; *Helping Relationship; Higher Education; *Interprofessional Relationship; Males; *Mentors; *Professional Development; Public Colleges; Sex Differences; *Teacher Attitudes; Women Faculty
IDENTIFIERS *ASHE Annual Meeting

ABSTRACT

People and relationships that have helped faculty to develop their careers were studied, along with the impact of these relationships on faculty careers. Successful faculty were asked to: identify their career helpers, assess the relative impact of various career helping relationships on their professional identities, and describe the contributions of the identified career helpers to the individual. The effects of gender, rank, discipline, and type of employing institution on career-helping relationships were also explored. The sample consisted of 54 tenured or tenure-accruing faculty members at three types of state-supported institutions: undergraduate institution of about 15,000 students; doctoral-granting institution enrolling about 24,000 students; and a top-ranked research university with more than 36,000 students. A woman from each of three professional ranks and broad disciplinary categories (natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities) was matched with a man of similar rank, discipline, and source of terminal degree. Gender differences in career helpers are identified, along with contributions of career helpers, including intellectual stimulation, professional values, aid in career building, and affective support. There are 9 references. (SW)

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ED292397

Faculty Perceptions of Their Career-Helping Relationships

A Paper Presented

to the

Association for the Study of Higher Education

November 22, 1987

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*This research was supported, in part, by the American Association of University Women.

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This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education held at the Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel in Baltimore, Maryland, November 21-24, 1987. This paper was reviewed by ASHE and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC collection of ASHE conference papers.

Faculty Descriptions of Their Career-Helping Relationships

This study addresses qualitative issues of faculty career development. Questions of what kinds of people and relationships have been helpful to faculty in developing their careers are explored, and the impact of those relationships on faculty careers is examined. The study had its impetus in the discussions of adult and career development [6, 1], with particular focus on the ways mentoring has affected faculty career development. The data reported here suggest a composite picture that supports Levinson's [6] description of mentor relationships, but a series of gender and individual differences that vary substantially from the general model.

Background, Perspectives, and Design

The paper will report initial findings from a study that investigated faculty members' perceptions of their own career helping relationships. The study asked successful faculty to identify their career helpers, assess the relative impact of various career helping relationships on their professional identities, and describe the contributions of the identified career helpers to the individual. The study asked whether career-helping relationships differed by gender, rank, discipline, or type of employing institution.

Perspectives

The early 1980's saw the idea of mentoring receiving attention in both popular and academic literature. Drawing from Levinson's study of 40 men [6], popular literature touted the need for a mentor as essential to career success. Other research investigated the impact of career helpers variously called patrons, mentors, or sponsors [3, 7, 8]. In higher education settings, these career helpers were most often assumed to be major professors [2]. The studies built from investigations of the specific roles of mentors to an analysis of the difficulties in separating mentors from a host of other career helpers [7, 9]. In contrast to these studies that investigated the existence and impact of strong relationships, Granovetter [5] explored what he calls the "weak-tie" theory, i.e., the hypothesis that individuals' careers progress based on a series of "weak-ties" with others in the profession.

More recent literature has put mentoring or sponsorship in the context of other variables that also affect professional socialization. Clark and Corcoran, in particular, suggest that women suffer from a cumulative disadvantage that contributes to the lower representation of women at research universities [4].

Design/Methods

This study recognized the complexity of the topic and was designed to investigate the existence, extent, and impact of career-helping relationships while imposing as few biases as possible about the nature or value of any such relationships.

Data Collection Format. A structured interview was selected as the best way to gain the quality data necessary to respond to these issues. An interview schedule, which allowed for open-ended responses, was developed, tested, and revised. The terminology used in the interview schedule was selected to avoid the biases implicit in the literature and to avoid imposing a definition of career assistance on the respondents. It had become apparent to the authors when discussing the study as it was it was being formulated that individuals had a tendency to change their orientation when the term "mentor" was used. The authors speculate this resulted from the effects of the popular literature which stressed the need for succesful persons to have had a mentoring relationship. The term "career-helping relationships" was chosen because it did not carry the bias that, for instance, the term "mentor" did.

Sample. To select the sample, a woman from each of three professional ranks and broad disciplinary categories (natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities) was matched with a man similar to them in rank, discipline, and source of terminal degree. The process was repeated for each of the three institutional types studied. This resulted in a sample of 18 respondents at each institution for a total sample of 54. All respondents were tenured or tenure-accruing faculty members at their respective institutions.

Since the study was to address the issue of faculty differences by type of employing institution, the authors selected three institutions of significantly different character. All were state-supported. The first was a predominantly undergraduate institution of approximately 15,000 students. It reported offering a modest graduate program at the master's level. The second was a comprehensive, doctoral-granting institution enrolling about 24,000 students, 3,500 of whom were graduate students. This institution offered 23 doctoral and 60 master's programs. The third enrolled more than 36,000 students (c. 8,100 at the graduate level) and was a top-ranked, research institution. This last institution offered 77 doctoral and 94 master's level programs.

Interview Questions. The data reported here are based on a series of questions in which faculty were asked if they could name an individual who had been critical in their professional development. Further questions asked for descriptions of the career-helpers' role, the nature of the relationship

(professional/personal), and the importance of the relationship to the respondent's career-development. These questions were repeated as often as the respondent kept answering. After each subsequent career-helper was named, respondents were asked to distribute 100 points among all identified career-helpers to indicate their relative importance to the respondent.

Data Analysis. The data were analyzed in two ways. First, lists of career helpers and the assistance they gave were compiled. The data were classified into logical groups. Responses were then counted and categorized by the major variables used to select respondents: sex, discipline, and type of employing institution. This strategy identified patterns that may be worth further examination although no attempts can be made to generalize from the data. Respondent comments were then analyzed to identify common themes and indications of how the career-helping relationships had affected them.

Results

The data are organized to respond to four questions: Who were the career helpers? What patterns of responses were associated with specific career helpers? What did career helpers contribute? What affected the way career helping relationships developed and progressed?

The data are first described by the career-helpers named. Differences in gender, discipline, and employing institution are noted as appropriate. Then the types of assistance attributed to those career helpers is outlined. Whenever possible, specific quotations are included to give the flavor of the responses. When appropriate, relative numbers of responses are given once again to give a flavor for the importance of a particular theme to the overall respondent group. However, because of the nature of the study, more importance is placed on the qualitative responses than on the number of respondents citing a particular point.

Who Were Identified as Career Helpers?

The researchers offered no preconceptions about who respondents would name as career helpers. When they were categorized, they fit into all parts of the respondent's life: personal, educational, and professional. Viewed another way, they seemed to fit into the three categories described by Clark and Corcoran [4]: anticipatory socialization, entry, and role continuance. Given this framework, early anticipatory influences included relatives, and teachers from high school, undergraduate study, or beginning graduate work. Entry socialization influences included relatives, particularly

spouses, as well as undergraduate and graduate faculty, including post-doctoral advisors and "gurus" in the field. (The term "guru" was used by respondents and not imposed by the researchers.) Role continuance was provided by graduate advisors and faculty, individual colleagues including spouses, groups of colleagues, and various kinds of administrators--department chairs, deans, or project directors.

What Patterns of Responses Were Associated with Specific Career Helpers?

The most obvious pattern is that women and men differed on several points. Gender differences were apparent in most of the patterns identified while disciplinary and institutional differences appeared only occasionally. These are noted as relevant.

*Women had more variation in the number and kind of career-helping relationships they identified. The respondents most frequently named 3 career helpers. Twelve (12) women and 17 men (29 of 54 respondents) followed this pattern. Women named between one and five career helpers, while men listed two, three, or four. Women named more relatives and teachers early in their careers.

*Women, particularly those in the natural science and humanities, named more personal influences as key in their professional development. Six (6) women in the humanities and five (5) in the natural sciences named their spouses as influential, while only one (1) man from each of those disciplines identified a spouse as important. This description is confounded somewhat because five (5) women and the one man were all married to academics, most of whom shared the respondent's discipline. Therefore, a spouse/colleague relationship appears to be operating.

*Women, particularly those in the humanities and social sciences, reached further back in their educational histories to identify anticipatory socialization influences. In the humanities, two (2) women named high school teachers as influences; two (2) women and two (2) men named undergraduate professors as important; and two (2) women and identified master's degree advisors. In the social sciences, four (4) women and two (2) men named undergraduate professors. In the natural sciences, one (1) man named a high school teacher while four (4) women and five (5) men named undergraduate professors. Women, in other words, named more individuals who provided generalized guidance but who operated on the periphery of their specific career concerns.

*Men named career helpers from their graduate programs more often than women. Most important is that 24 men but only 15

women identified their major professors as important career helpers. Since the major professor is frequently reported as a key influence for faculty careers, this difference appears to be signifcant and worth further exploration. One woman summarized the impact of this difference, when she said she had always "felt atypical because [she] didn't "have a research mentor" (f, ns, associate).[1] No gender differences were apparent in the identification of other graduate faculty as career helpers (11 women and 12 men).

*Men, particularly those in the humanities and social sciences, identified important career helpers from their professional lives more often than women. In the humanities, 6 men and 3 women named colleagues other than spouses as important; in the social sciences, 5 men and 1 woman named colleagues as important. In the natural sciences, the number was approximately equal with 4 women and 3 men identifying colleagues as important.

*Both men and women identified a group of colleagues as important. Collectively, these groups helped the respondents develop their careers. Through receiving an National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship, a woman in the humanities developed a peer group of researchers, people who critiqued her work and offered support as she prepared for tenure. Another woman in the humanities relied on her female colleagues to learn how to negotiate and advance within the profession. A natural scientist depended on a group of field researchers to bring samples to her laboratory, and a male social scientist had a group that supports professional participation and provides go companionship in the process. The identification of these groups offers support for Granovetter's [5] notion that careers advance because of the diversity rather than the strength of an individual's ties with others in the profession.

What Did Career Helpers Contribute?

The most important contribution attributed to career helpers was the intellectual stimulation and development that continues to be the core of the respondents' self definitions. In addition, career helpers played a key role in beginning the professional socialization process by setting expectations for the respondents and in modeling and communicating a set of professional values and behaviors needed within the profession. Career helpers also assisted with specific career building ac-

[1]Quotations are attributed based on a shorthand description of the respondents. Within the parentheses, respondents will be identified first by sex (f, m), then by discipline (ns, ss, humanities) and finally by rank.

tivities, and they provided affective support throughout the entire process. Although these categories are treated separately for purposes of discussion, they were described as integral pieces of a whole.

Intellectual Stimulation and Development

Whatever the more specific contributions of career helpers, they were credited with providing the respondents with intellectual stimulation and development. Central to the responses was the concept of "intellectual indebtedness." Respondents owed their career helpers their own identities as professionals, and they offered a definition of themselves as professionals which seemed to encompass more than their careers. Their responses distinguished between the essence of professionalism and the trappings more appropriately described as career. The statement of one woman social scientist captured this idea. She said of her major advisor, "his most profound influence was not in terms of networks" . . . but was "to challenge me to think and to rejoice when I came up with ideas" (f, ss, full). Another senior woman articulated a distinction reflected by other respondents. She said, "What is important to me is being an intellectual. . . inquiring about the world and what is going on in it . . .all other things about professional behavior can be picked up easily" (f, ss, full).

Love of Discipline. More specifically, respondents described this intellectual debt in terms of their love of their own disciplines. Career helpers were credited with creating this excitement. Some respondents said, that as students, their interest in their disciplines was "sparked" (f, ss, assistant) or even "set on fire" (f, humanities, asssociate). One senior woman had "fallen in love" with her discipline as an undergraduate (f, hum, full). For the respondents, initial interest evolved into an identification with the discipline and consequently an intellectual affiliation. A male assistant professor made this point when he said:

> "the number one thing one learns from another philosopher is how to do philosophy . . .it's like working with a master . . .So, the first thing [my dissertation advisor did] was simply be a good philosopher in my presence."
> (m, humanities, assist).

Importance of Timing. The timing of the association between the respondent and the career helper associated with "stimulating curiosity" and interest in the discipline or research seemed important. The associations seemed to occur relatively early in the respondents' educational histories, indicating an openness or "readiness" to be influenced. One woman described her major advisor, who had also been one of her first graduate professors. She reported, "he didn't

"necessarily" have the best ideas, nor was he "even the best model, but he was the first one . . . and he made a lasting impression" (f, ss, associate).

The respondents elaborated on the particulars of the intellectual debt they owed as they described a pattern of socialization into the professions that began with expectations about their professional roles, proceeded through the development of a professional value structure, and including specific career building assistance as well as affective support. The role of expectations setting seemed to be a first step in this process.

Expectations Setting

Respondents described career-helpers as affecting the expectations they had for themselves, but the expectations set seem to vary substantially by gender. In general, women and some men reported career-helpers had communicated the somewhat vague notion that a professional career was a possibility for them. In contrast, men, and a limited number of women, indicated career-helpers had communicated specific expectations within a particular discipline.

General Expectations Set for Women. Women reported as career-helpers people who had helped them realize they could have a professional career. Twelve (12) of 27 respondents named as a career helper someone who had set the expectation that a professional role was possible or who had helped raise the professional expectations set by the women for themselves. Only two (2) men addressed this theme.

By-and-large, family members (7 women) or teachers early in the respondents' academic careers (3 women, 2 men) had made this contribution. One woman recalled her aunt, a social worker. The fact that her aunt had a profession was influential in creating the assumption the respondent would go to college (f, ss, full). Another reported a similar response to confronting her first female mathematics teacher. She said, "it was the first time I'd ever seen a woman in a profession. She dearly loved what she did . . .and did it very well" (f, ns, full). Yet another recalled that her mother had wanted her to be a concert pianist, a specific option that she rejected in favor of pursuing a doctorate in the social sciences (f, ss, full). One man and one woman were specifically influenced into college by a high school teacher or guidance counselor (m, humanities, full) (f, humanities, full); and one man was influenced into graduate school (m, ns, assoc) by an undergraduate professor.

General Expectations Initiated by Career-Helpers. As this expectation-setting relationship was described, the career hel-

pers appeared to initiate the standard setting while the respondents were recipients of the expectations. The respondent's younger ages reinforces the image of a person becoming aware of the choices available to them and being open to influence in selecting one of interest to them.

Even when they were chronologically older, however, women continued to cite assistance from family members in setting the expectations that they could have professional careers. Spouses played this critical role for some of the women. One woman's husband let her know that she had "the opportunity to have a career" (f, humanities, associate). Another's spouse influenced her into a specific type of career. Her own sense of her professional identify evolved as she moved from job to job, but her spouse's values influenced her to apply for a university faculty position. Her spouse wanted her to be a "university professor," because "he thinks it's a better use of one's life to be in a university" (f, ss, assist). Despite their older age, these women seem to be describing the same phenomenon of reviewing choices available to them and identifying the influences that led them in the directions they chose. Instead of attending to the expectations set by people chronologically older, these women turned to people professionally more established and keyed into the expectations set by these "older" professionals.

Specific Expectations Set for Men. Men also described career helpers who set expectations for them, but the phenomenon they described was qualitatively different. Men did not focus on career helpers who influenced them into a professional career. Rather, they named people who had set standards for excellence within a discipline.

Three natural scientists, as undergraduates, had encountered university faculty who set high expectations for their professional behaviors. One did an "excellent job of encouraging people . . .[in] setting the rigid kind of environment . . . [and] we did what was necessary to live up to those expectations" (mm, ns, full prof). Others "set a very high standard" (m, ns, assoc), or "encouraged [the student] to push [himself] more" (m, ns, assoc). The men reported, in other words, that their early career helpers had set very specific and "rigid" professional standards.

For men and some women, major professors continued the process of setting high professional expectations. One advisor, who was "admired tremendously," always asked, "why don't you push a little harder? . . . just work a little harder on this" (m, hum, assoc).

The one woman who described this kind of profession specific standard-setting recalled her graduate advisor who en-

couraged her to complete a Ph.D. rather than another terminal degree. He later influenced her to publish her work. First her dissertation then other research were published by reputable presses in her field. By her own report, this respondent had already been teaching for 15 years prior to beginning her graduate program, and thus was older than the typical graduate students in the program. By encouraging her to live up to high expectations, the professor--an older professional--played a critical role in helping her meet the high research productivity standards she already could recognize and articulate. This process was not one of defining professional expectations but of inspiring the confidence the respondent could meet them.

The importance of these high expectations in establishing professional behaviors was discussed from a negative perspective by one male respondent. He described his sense of failure in meeting the expectations set by his post-doctoral advisor. Describing the present relationship between the two of them as distant, the respondent asserted he "has not been as successful as those people expected" (m, ns, assoc). By not meeting the expectations he perceived, this respondent judged himself personally not as successful as he would have liked.

Professional Values

As part of their intellectual debt and the results of meeting high expectations, respondents gained a professional value structure that supported and paralleled the intellectual debt they owed their career helpers. It included a love of and ability to conduct systematic intellectual inquiry and a parallel concern with quality teaching. These values were transmitted through modeling, working together, and discussion.

Value of Systematic Inquiry. As a direct extension of their intellectual debt, respondents acquired a value structure that set standards for the way research was conducted and the personal behaviors that support inquiry. A graduate faculty is credited with teaching the respondent "how to think scientifically and develop experimental design" (m,ns,assoc). Respondents, in short, reported acquiring the investigation and analysis skills associated with doctoral study as they gained an appreciation for the value of inquiry. But they also acquired a value for the professional activities that support those values. One career helper was credited with imparting a sense of the importance of all professional activity. The respondent said:

> I know that he gave me and others really the full importance of professional activities: publications, presenting, session organizing . . .that kind of thing for professional meetings.
>
> (m, ss, assistant)

Teaching. An important subset of the professional value structure described by respondents involved the values and behaviors involved with the teaching role. The contributions of career helpers to developing the professional role of teacher were important to nearly a third of the respondents (10 women, 6 men). The process seemed to parallel the more general development of professional values. Again, early influence seems key. An undergraduate professor was described as the first one who "made me aware of teaching as a profession. He did not set out to do that . . . he was just doing his job" (f, ns, assist). The composite picture of the university teaching professional is one who has "an all encompassing knowledge of the field," is a "model" of teaching content, enthusiastic, and able to relate to students (f, ss, assist). Further, the university teacher does "accurate and professional scholarship," writes clearly, and is interested in learning "technical research skills" (m, humanities, assistant). And most important, the teacher instills a "love" for the subject (m, humanities, full). The teaching role, in short, embodies and transmits the values of intellectual inquiry.

An institutional bias was most clear on this point. Ten (10) of the 16 respondents were employed by the undergraduate institution, indicating an interplay of individual and organization either at the initial selection stage or as a result of the individual's working in and being affected by the institution. The data analyzed to this point give no insights into this question.

Process for Transmitting Values. The values seemed to have been communicated in several ways. Most often, the respondents seemed to have observed faculty members modeling them. One person was impressed with the way a graduate faculty member "became excited about the things he was working on . . .his attitude and comitment to work . . .and his attitude of inquiry for its own sake" (f, humanities, assoc). Other faculty were described as demonstrating the "integrity" needed to do research (m,ss,full prof), or the "higher integrity" involved in how a professional handles interpersonal relationships particularly those with students (m, ss, assoc prof).

In addition to acquiring values through observing behaviors, the respondents also learned by working with their career helpers. The theme was highlighted in the comment that a major professor had created "a sense of sharing intellectual excitement in a discovery" (m, humanities, full). Research collaboration, replete with its implications of career building assistance was a common strategy for creating the sense of sharing described and was a common behavior demonstrated by career helpers.

At times the values were transmitted more explicitly through discussion. Some graduate faculty had conversations with graduate advisors in which the ethics and "morality of a [faculty position] were discussed" (f, humanities, assistant).

Career Building Assistance

In addition to the disciplinary values and the corresponding behaviors, career helpers provided other, more specific kinds of career assistance. Career helpers helped in job-finding, in developing the political survival skills needed to continue within a job and the profession, and, perhaps most important, they provided access to others in the profession and to other professional opportunities.

Job-Finding Assistance. Only eight respondents mentioned job-seeking assistance as important assistance they had received in their careers. The assumption seemed to operate that providing recommendations was an expected part of career-helping behavior and did not deserve comment. But respondents did identify job-finding help, the process described involved a commitment beyond a simple referral. One woman said her major professor helped in terms of jobs saying he "would discuss the possibilities, what it would mean, what kind of place [it was] . . . if he knew anybody" (f, humanities, assist).

Political Skills. A specific subset of the professional behaviors modeled by career helpers were those day-to-day skills needed to succeed in the profession. Both men and women referred to these political skills, which they had gained from their career helpers. One man was consious of having been taught to be a graduate student (m, ns, assistant), while another learned from his post-doctoral advisor that he had "to be more aggressive than I had thought" (m, ns, associate). Others learned "perspective on the field--what was important" (m, ss, full) while another learned from an undergraduate teacher "the role of the university as a whole" (f, ns, assoc). This kind of assistance came from career-helpers described as "very astute about the unwritten rules about how things are done (m, humanities, assist).

Access. Just as they had shared their knowledge, career helpers shared their resources and offered respondents access to disciplinary activity. Respondents identified introductions "to people whom he thought would be interested in me professionally," (m, humanities, full) as a key type of assistance and discussed the value of having worked with a post-doctoral advisor who was "highly regarded" (m, ns, assoc). Advisor's good reputations made other contacts easier. On another level, career helpers gave referrals or made recommendations

to do reviews, attend conferences, or speak as guest lecturers. Still others were nominated for office in an association.

One point worth noting in this area of career building assistance is that the number of responses varied substantially by institution. Respondents from the comprehensive institution offered 35 examples. In contrast, the undergraduate institution respondents cited 14 instances of such career-building support, and the research institution respondents offered 9. The authors speculate this difference may arise from the nature and climate of the institution. At the time of this study, significant efforts were underway to attract research faculty and to provide various kinds of career building assistance.

Affective Support

Throughout the process of intellectual development and professional socialization, respondents reported receiving affective support, a critical component of their career assistance. This kind of support had several manifestations, with many respondents describing a personal component to their relationships with their career helpers. For some, the personal component had a friendly, but casual side, e.g. "we'd drink beer on Friday afternoons" (m, ss, associate). But, at its most intense, the personal relationship seemed to blend with the professional. One person articulated this theme by saying of her male major professor, the "relationship sort of involves the whole person and an awareness that you don't really separate personal issues that are completely unrelated [to the professional issues]" (f, humanities, assistant).

Although the nature of the personal relationships varied, men were more apt to note how such affective support increased their own confidence in their professional accomplishments. One said of his dissertation advisor:

> "he gave me the confidence that I could have something to offer philosophically . . . he kept giving me confidence in what I was doing . . .in saying it's good . . .as good as other professional stuff that's out there. That was a critical time, and [the encouragement] really made things go for me."
>
> (m, hum, assist)

Women echoed this theme, even using similar language. One woman said of her disseration advisor, "[he] gave [me] confidence I could go on and succeed" (f, ns, full). But women also commented on support received on a personal level. A spouse helped one woman "get over her guilt for neglecting husband and children" (f, hum, ass). An advisor gave "a lot of moral support. . . emotional support in addition, to all the

intellectual stuff" (f, humanities, assist).

The affective support seemed important for both men and women although women discussed its personal as well as the professional aspects.

How Did the Career Helping Relationships Develop and Progress?

As they discussed their career helpers and the way those relationships had been formed and continued to function, the respondents discussed risk-taking, particularly confronting barriers, as one component of the relationships.

When the women described risk-taking behaviors, it seemed to be the respondent herself who had taken the risk. The men's comments, on the other hand, described a situation in which others had taken a risk on their behalf.

Women Took Intellectual Risks. Women related stories of putting themselves on the line intellectually and taking risks that helped advance their professional abilities. One person who had not done as well as she wanted in a Shakespeare course exercised her option to retake the course. The second time she "wrote a much better paper" which was then "accepted at prestigious conference." At the conference, she met her professor who also was presenting a paper. He was "very pleased" with her success, and she credits him with teaching her "how much courage and grit I could dig out for myself" (f, humanities, associate). Even though she had taken the risk and had met a very high standard in the process, this person attributed the career-helper with setting the standard and, in essence, in issuing the challenge that required her to draw upon her internal resources.

Another woman, more aware of the risk she was taking, sought out a scholar who was "tremendously famous and respected" to teach her an Oriental language even though she had been advised when she entered her program to "watch out" for him. Her risk resulted in intensive tutorial that "helped her tremendously" by giving her the "care and attention" that helped her progress rapidly (f, humanities, assistant). One man reported using a similar strategy to get the attention of his dissertation advisor. The faculty member had a reputation for being difficult, "but I wrote a paper and showed it to him. He liked [it] and agreed to work with me" (m, humanities, associate). Both of these examples show people aware of the risks they needed to take to develop the knowledge or affiliations they perceived as critical to their own advancement. These respondents clearly initiated the relationships they needed.

Men Had Risks Taken on Their Behalf. In general, the men's risk-taking stories depicted risks more often taken on their behalf. Or, stated another way, opportunities were made available to them to grow and develop professionally. One reported an opportunity to do field work as an undergraduate (m, ss, assoc) while another reported being admitted to an anthropology doctoral program with no field experience (m, ss, assist). Another was let alone as he began his dissertation work. His major professor had become "convinced I knew exactly what I wanted to do and it was acceptable" (m, ss, assistant). Two people attributed support to department chairs, one of whom "gave permission" to switch research orientations (m, ss, full) and another who "took a chance" and encouraged the respondent to work professionally as well as teach (m, humanities, full). Only one woman reported an advisor who had helped her work out a way to be away from campus for a year and still finish her degree. In these instance, the career helpers had taken risks, albeit risks of the level that probably had no long-term impact on their own careers. But the career helpers inititated the activity and, through taking risks, provided opportunities that had significant impact on the respondent's careers.

Barriers Confronted. In addition to taking more risks than the men, women reported barriers that they perceived themselves or they reported--sometimes as career support--circumstances identified by other research as a barrier. Eleven (11) women and three (3) men identified barriers, suggesting a differential disadvantage that may support Clark and Corcoran's findings [2].

Most of the identified barriers were described as occuring at the master's and doctoral levels. One woman reported an incident she described as "probably sex discrimination." In her first graduate program, she had encountered a professor who gave her a low grade on an oral examination while he was making it clear "that the department was going to cut the number of graduate students." She estimates her career had been delayed "probably five or six years" until she began another graduate program (f, humanities, assistant). Another has had to fight her dissertation advisor's "negative reputation in the field" (f, ss, assistant). Comments from two respondents summarize this general sense of confronting barriers. One respondent gave 90 percent of the credit for her present success to herself (f, ss, associate); another phrased the perception negatively saying she has received more "flack than support" (f, humanities, associate).

The men who identified barriers also found them at the doctoral level. One dismissed a doctoral advisor who was sometimes negative, and another gave himself 100 percent of the credit for his career successes, saying he had received little support. He described a doctoral program where students were

isolated from faculty, where the entire atmosphere was negative and competitive and many students dropped out (m, ns, assoc).

A full professor in the humanities, noted a variation on the theme of confronting barriers when she talked about a colleague who has been personally friendly. She said he had even "opened doors, but they led nowhere" (f, humanities, full). One woman, now on the faculty of a major research institution, also seemed to have career helpers who fit this mold, although the respondent herself described the incident in the context of support. She reported being pleased that her major professor had helped her get her first job at a prestigious undergraduate liberal arts institution. His recommendation that she moving to an institution that emphasized teaching obviously did her research career no long term harm. However, the expectation that bright women doctoral students will teach rather than do research is cited by Clark and Corcoran [4] as one of the barriers to women achieving higher representation at research institutions.

Three other women related anecdotes in this category. One had been the first female graduate in her department in the nearly 30 years it had been organized. For her, this was reported as a fact, but she also reported no career assistance from graduate faculty. Her primary career assistance had come from her husband, a male colleague, and a group of women "who opened professional opportunities" for her (f, humanities, assistant). Another cited as supportive her first department chair who offered jobs both to herself and her husband. In her perception, he had been key in influencing the faculty to support her for the position. Perhaps as trade-off, her responsibilies, in an institution seeking to increase its research reputation, were 100 percent teaching. A third woman--the one who felt atypical because she had no research mentor--was offered laboratory space after she had finished her degree and intended to stay in the community with her husband (also an academic). The agreement was that she could have the space as long as she supported her own research programs. A reading of her resume indicated she did that be supporting her salary and research equipment and assistance need for five years with grants from the National Institutes of Health. After that, she was offered a tenure-track position. The woman clearly overcame any barriers the situation posed, and perhaps it was her definition of the situation as supportive that allowed her to achieve her success.

Analysis

Perhaps the most compelling finding from this study is that faculty, in response to open-ended questions about career helpers, focus on the essence of their professionalism. They define the intellectual debt they owed their career helpers in

terms of the intellectual excitement and love of inquiry essential to their professional identities. This most critical kind of career support was enhanced by the development of a professional value structure, which career helpers transmitted through modeling, demonstrations, and discussions. Together, career helpers helped respondents develop the skills and demonstrate the behaviors associated with intellectual inquiry and university teaching.

The composite picture of career assistance presented here seems to support Levinson's definition of mentoring relationships [6]. An older career helper inspires, guides, models, and assists a younger adult into a career. Respondent's owed their career helpers an intellectual debt and from them, they gained socialization into their professions, and continuing career assistance through collaborative activities and job-finding assistance. With the identification of barriers, the composite relationship described even signals the personal conflict Levinson describes.

But most individual respondents did not fit this pattern. Although 11 respondents described their most important career helper as a "mentor," most used the term as a commonplace academic term nearly synonymous with "major professor." Only two men described relationships consistent with Levinson's overall definition. One discussed in detail his relationship with a graduate faculty member, a relationship described as a classic mentoring experience. This male, assistant professor of humanities said:

> [I] had a "real mentor." He was the first person who got me to think. For a long time, he was very supportive. He introduced me to good deal of what I know about art and music. [He was] constantly challenging me, and for a while was the mainstay of my intellectual development . . . but it was the personal relationship that got to be oppressive. Having sort of developed me, he wanted to keep me. At that point, I broke the relationship off. That is when my dissertation advisor came along, and I made it through graduate school in spite of [my mentor].
>
> (m, humanities, assistant)

This respondent was clearly aware of some of the current definitions of mentoring, and he recognized the drawbacks of the relationship. Still, as a student this person was able to relate to other faculty, in particular his advisor, and advance further intellectually. He also reported close and excellent working relationships with colleagues. His experience and that of others having a number of collaborator as career helpers suggests that people who do well in establishing mutually beneficial intellectual relationships can do so in a number of settings and with a number of individuals. Developing effec-

tive working relationships may be a skill that is learned and can be cultivated.

When the composite story that describes an overall mentoring relationship is told by gender, substantial differences appear. Women reached earlier into their lives to define career assistance, and relied more on personal relationships such as those with spouses and other relatives. A smaller proportion had close affiliation with their dissertation advisors, and, in general, they had reported less affiliation with professional colleagues when they moved into professional positions. Women, in short, seemed to have career helpers more on the periphery of their professional careers. In addition, women seemed to take more risks and overcome more barriers as they travelled their career paths.

The study supports the accumulative disadvantage theory set forth by Clark and Corcoran [4]. Although the women in this sample were, by one definition, successful because they were tenured or tenure-accruing faculty members, the group appeared to have had fewer advantages than their male peers. Even the mechanisms that provided support--such as expectation-setting--seemed to function at a lower level for the women than the men. Women recalled expectations that they would have professional careers while men recalled expectations that they would perform well in their fields. On the other hand, women had to take greater intellectual risks and overcome more barriers than the men. The point needs to be made that individual men may have encountered disadvantages, but, in general, the women appear more disadvantaged.

Most respondents drew their career support from a large variety of individuals who helped shape them. This point gives some credence to Granovetter's hypothesis that careers develop based on a series of weak-ties [5] with others in the professions. The picture outlined here differs from Granovetter's hypothesis because of the number and kind of career helpers named. Several women identified spouses as key continuing sources of support. Presumably, this relationship represents a strong personal tie. Because many of the spouses were also academics, the relationship represents a continuing source of intellectual as well as affective support.

This initial analysis of the data provides some insights into career helping relationships, and it also opens areas that need further exploration. The apparent gender differences need further examination to determine their generalizability. In particular, the definition of women as intellectual risk-takers, which runs counter to popular beliefs, demands some thought and attention. Other areas that need further exploration are the ties to academic productivity, the impact of any organizational variables, e.g. doctoral-granting institution

and employing institution, and differences apparent because of respondent's age or life stage. Policy and practice implications for higher education also need to be developed.

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